

My 12 yr. old daughter was finally diagnosed with a learning disability in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. My daughter has dyslexia. From the very first day of kindergarten, my daughter has struggled immensely with academics. In kindergarten, she would come home many days, crying, saying that she is stupid. At this point she received minimal intervention to help her keep up with the other students. My daughter was retained in kindergarten, with the thought that perhaps she just was not “mature” enough.

First grade brought more frustration, to both my daughter and parent. She received tier 1 support with minimal progress. My daughter, at a very early age, learned how to hide the fact that she did not understand the school work. She learned how to glance at other students’ work. As her parent, I trusted the school teachers, tutors and administration that they knew what her issues were and how to teach her.

Second grade, I knew despite the added tier 2 intervention, my daughter still was making minimal progress. My daughter was diagnosed with ADD, inattentive type. By all teacher reports, she was a sweet child, well behaved and hard working. Why was she not making any progress? A school evaluation did not come up with any concrete answers, only showed that my daughter had a slow working memory and slow processing speed.

Third grade brought more in-school tutor sessions, tutors with a college degree. What were their qualifications for helping a student who consistently scored below goal/grade level? Tutors would get frustrated with my daughter when a word was told to her on one page of reading and then my daughter could not recognize the same word on the next page. The tutors felt my daughter was not paying attention. This could not be farther from the truth. My daughter spent every moment of her school day trying to learn, yearning just to be like the other kids while suffering in silence at knowing she was different. My daughter is just 8 yrs. old, lacks self-esteem, does not raise her hand in class and fears that other kids as well as teachers will know she is stupid. She hates school, cries almost every morning that she does not want to go to school. She is disorganized at school, has no phonemic awareness, poor fluency, and substitutes the word “road” for “street” when reading, “stone” for “rock”.

Fourth grade is a year of tutors who talk the talk but cannot walk the walk. Again, other than a college degree, what are their qualifications to help my child?

Fifth grade has brought on all new issues....homework. Each night is a struggle. My daughter resists every minute and I, the parent, am losing my temper.....daily.

Throughout the past several years, I have voiced my concern that despite what we see and do know about my daughter, we are missing *something*. An outside evaluation by a private professional at the end of second grade still did not provide an answer as to why my daughter could not read better yet let alone give guidance as to how she was to be taught. Her teachers who saw and worked with her everyday had no answers and to be quite honest, were just shuffling her along.

Finally, in fifth grade, a new school psychologist wanted to test my daughter again. The result...my daughter had a learning disability, auditory processing impairment....dyslexia!!

Unfortunately, my daughter was not being taught the way in which she could learn. School years wasted. My daughter had to learn how to come out of her shell and gain self-confidence. Why did her elementary school teachers and reading tutors not see the signs? In retrospect, so many signs of dyslexia were there. We need to train out teachers to recognize the symptoms as well as hire certified tutors, beyond a college degree, for our children. Once her learning disability was identified, the Special Education teacher told me it would be a few weeks before she would know exactly what program or methodology would be used to help my daughter. I felt surely my daughter is not the only child in the school or district with dyslexia. Again, it made me feel uneasy and concerned over teacher qualifications. To this day, my daughter hates to read and does not like going to school.

If a child cannot learn the way a teacher is teaching, then the teacher must teach the way a child can learn.

I support SB 1054, An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia. Additional supports should be added to the bill.

Thank you.

Kathleen Kelley- parent

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